MARVEL
STAR WARS
DARTH VADER
GILLEN
LARROCA
DELGADO
008
delgado

Book II, Part II

SHADOWS AND SECRETS

Chaos disrupts the galaxy. After the destruction of the Death Star by a mysterious Force-strong rebel pilot, the Sith Lord DARTH VADER was deemed responsible by his master, Emperor Palpatine. Now pursuing his own agenda, Vader enlisted the assistance of the bounty hunter BOBA FETT and archaeologist DOCTOR APHRA.

In an attempt to find the boy who destroyed the Death Star, Vader returned to the desert planet of Tatooine only to find an empty husk of a hut, scorched with blaster marks where the boy battled the infamous bounty hunter.

Elsewhere on the Outer Rim planet Son-Tuul, a gathering of bounty hunters and mercenaries are greeted by Aphra, who offers them the chance to steal the sum of a lifetime from an Imperial ship....

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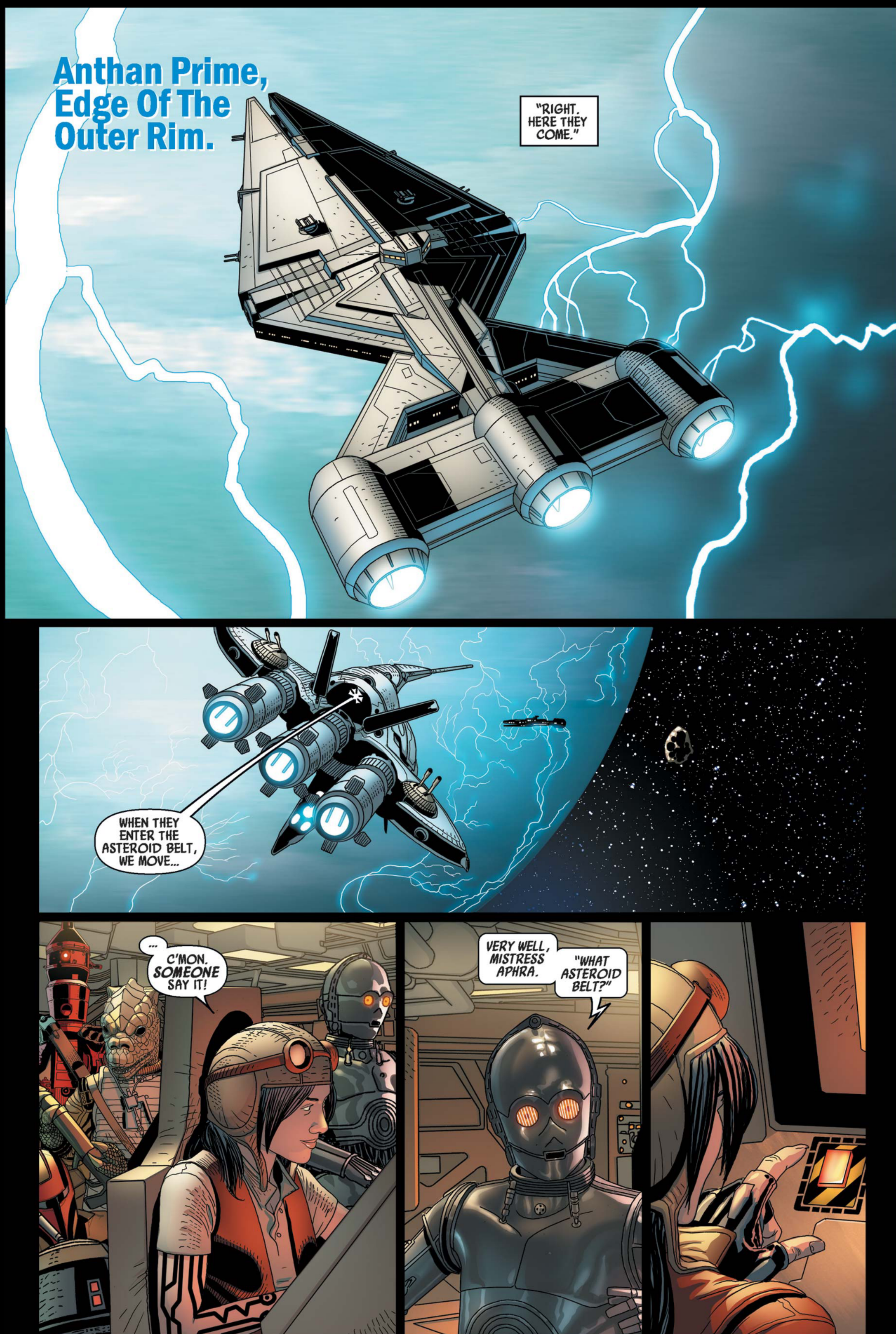
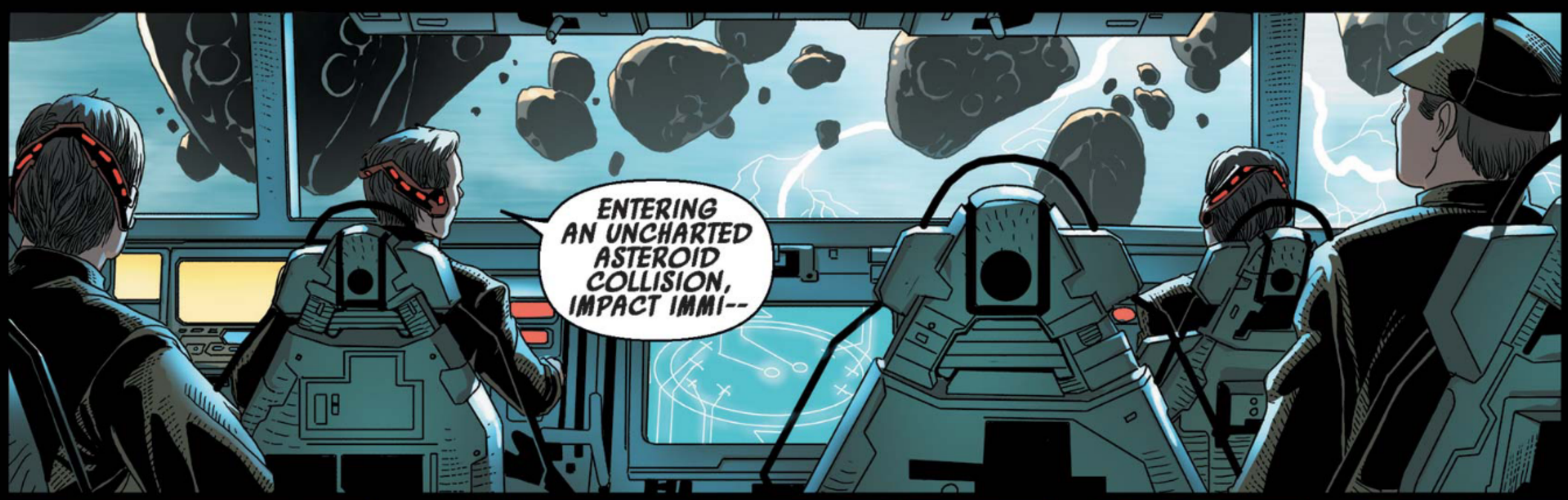
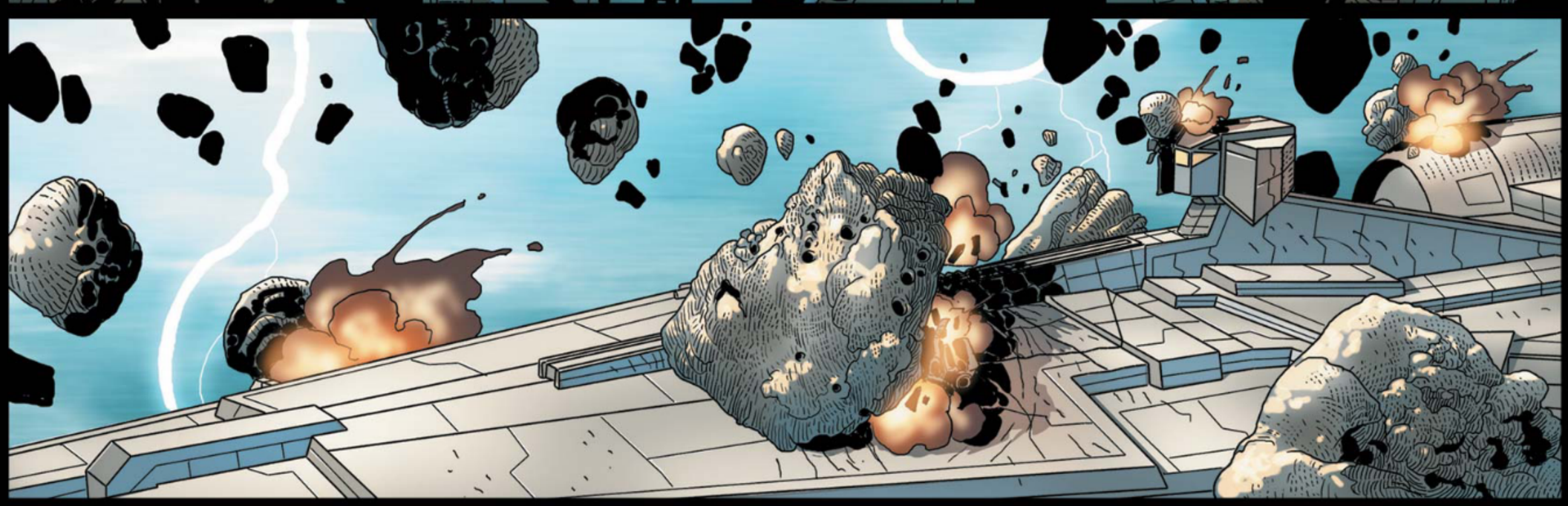
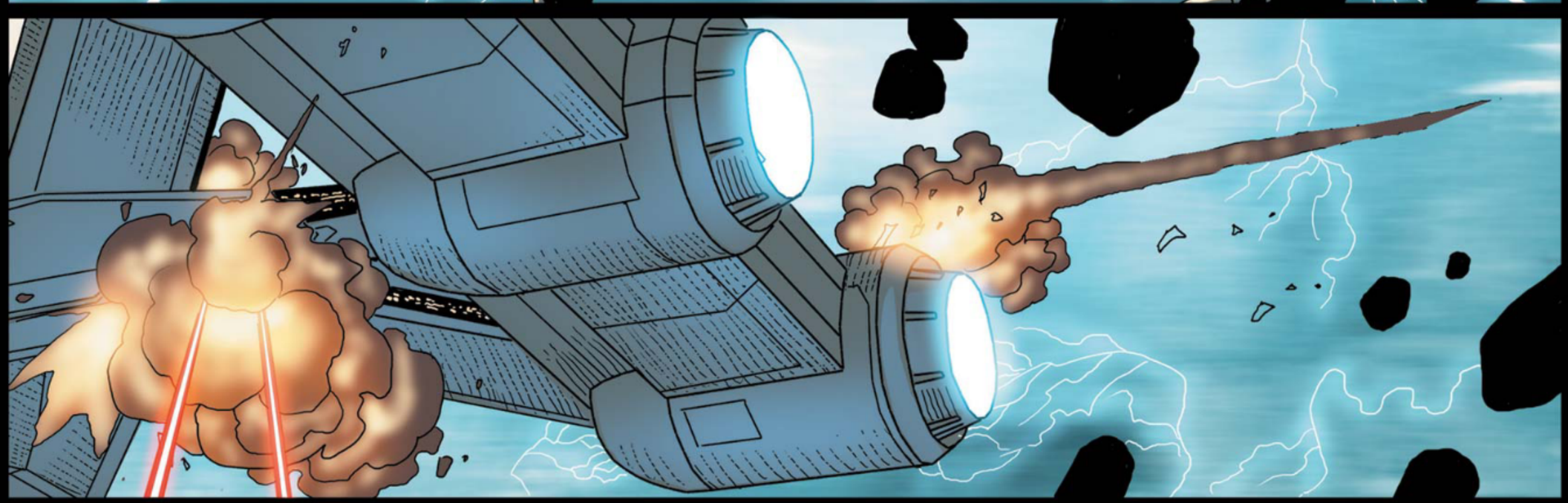

Anthan Prime, Edge Of The Outer Rim.
"RIGHT. HERE THEY COME."
WHEN THEY ENTER THE ASTEROID BELT, WE MOVE...
...
C'MON. SOMEONE SAY IT!
VERY WELL, MISTRESS APHRA.
"WHAT ASTEROID BELT?"

EMERGENCY! EMERGENCY!

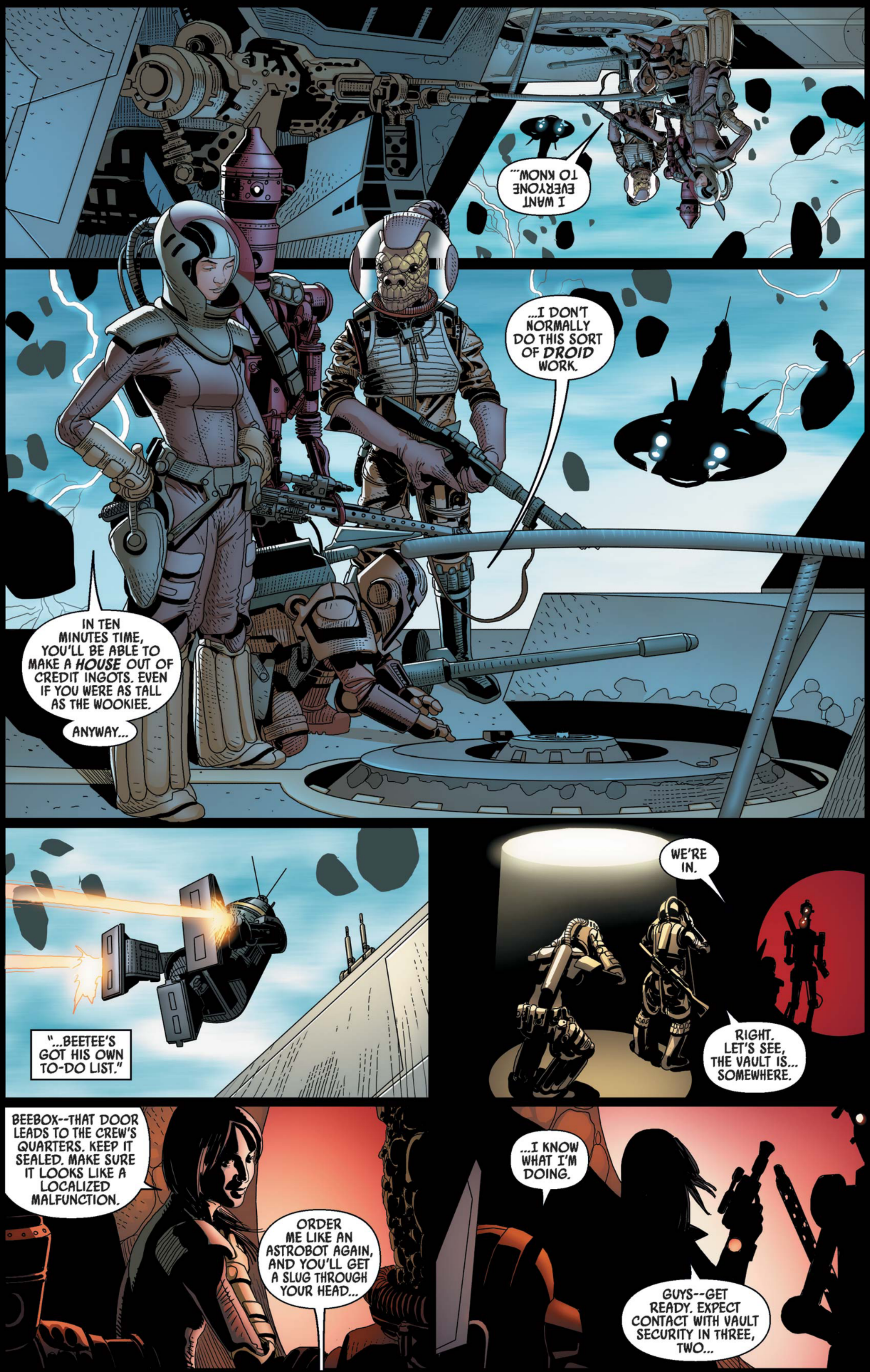

ENTERING AN UNCHARTED ASTEROID COLLISION, IMPACT IMMI--



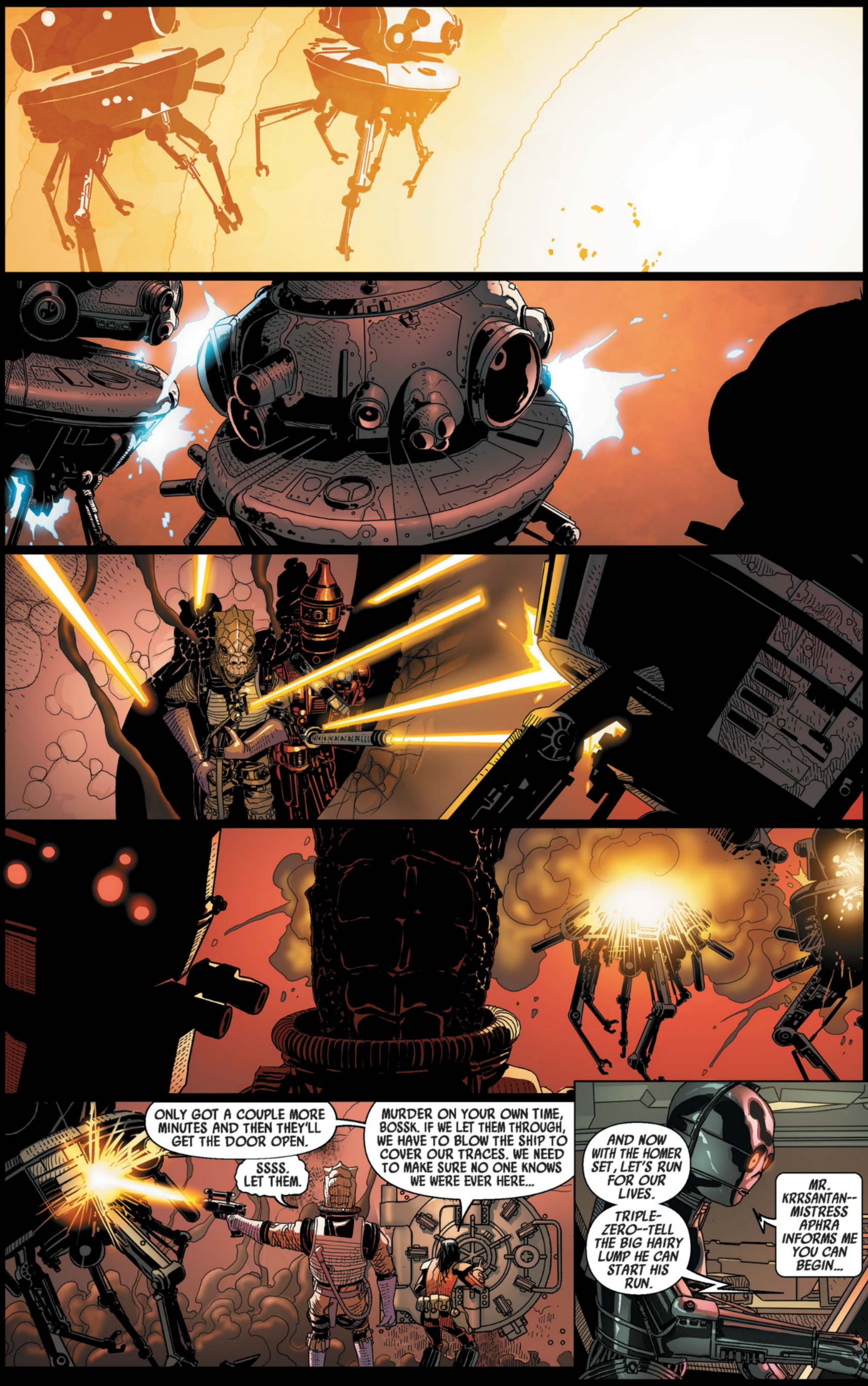
ION TORPEDO AWAY.



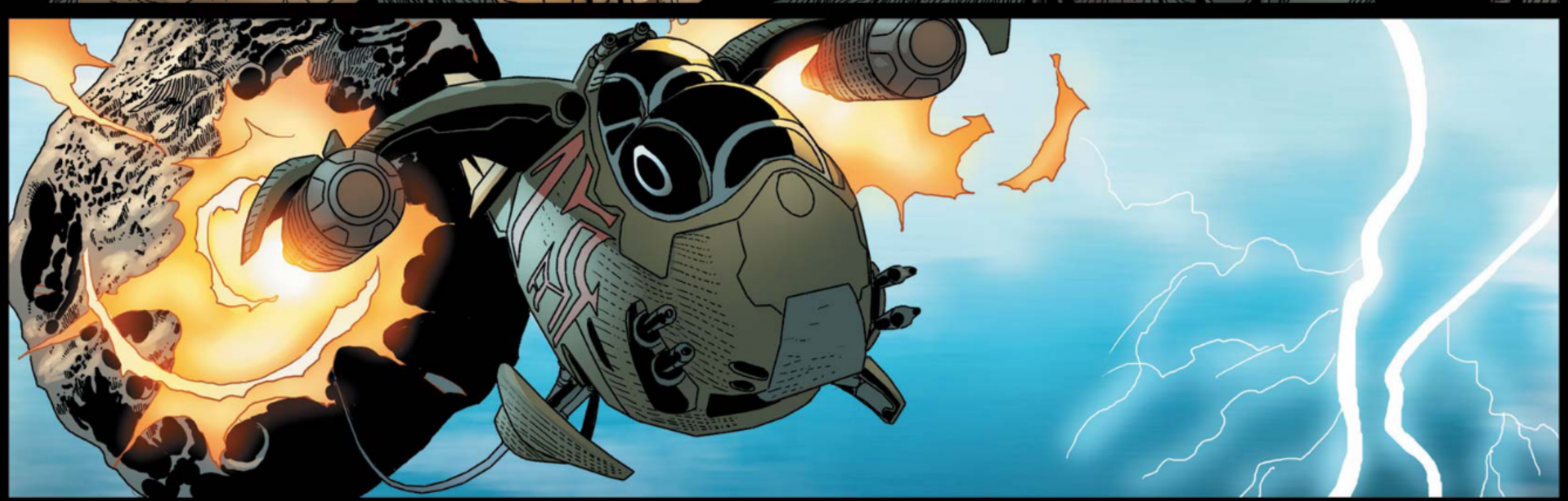
FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES THE IMPERIALS WILL THINK THEIR SYSTEMS BEING DOWN IS A SIDE EFFECT OF THE COLLISIONS.
LET'S GO TO WORK.

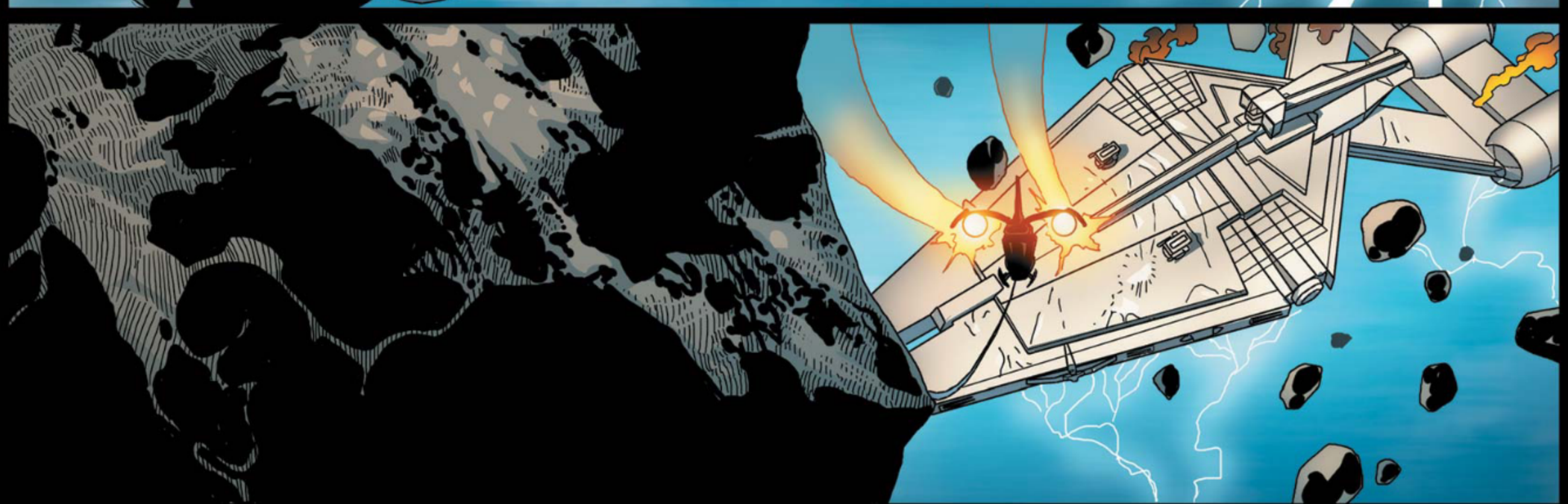

I WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW...
...I DON'T NORMALLY DO THIS SORT OF DROID WORK.
IN TEN MINUTES TIME, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE A HOUSE OUT OF CREDIT INGOTS. EVEN IF YOU WERE AS TALL AS THE WOOKIEE.
ANYWAY...
"...BEETEE'S GOT HIS OWN TO-DO LIST."
WE'RE IN.
RIGHT. LET'S SEE, THE VAULT IS... SOMEWHERE.
BEEBOX--THAT DOOR LEADS TO THE CREW'S QUARTERS. KEEP IT SEALED. MAKE SURE IT LOOKS LIKE A LOCALIZED MALFUNCTION.
ORDER ME LIKE AN ASTROBOT AGAIN, AND YOU'LL GET A SLUG THROUGH YOUR HEAD...
...I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
GUYS--GET READY. EXPECT CONTACT WITH VAULT SECURITY IN THREE, TWO...

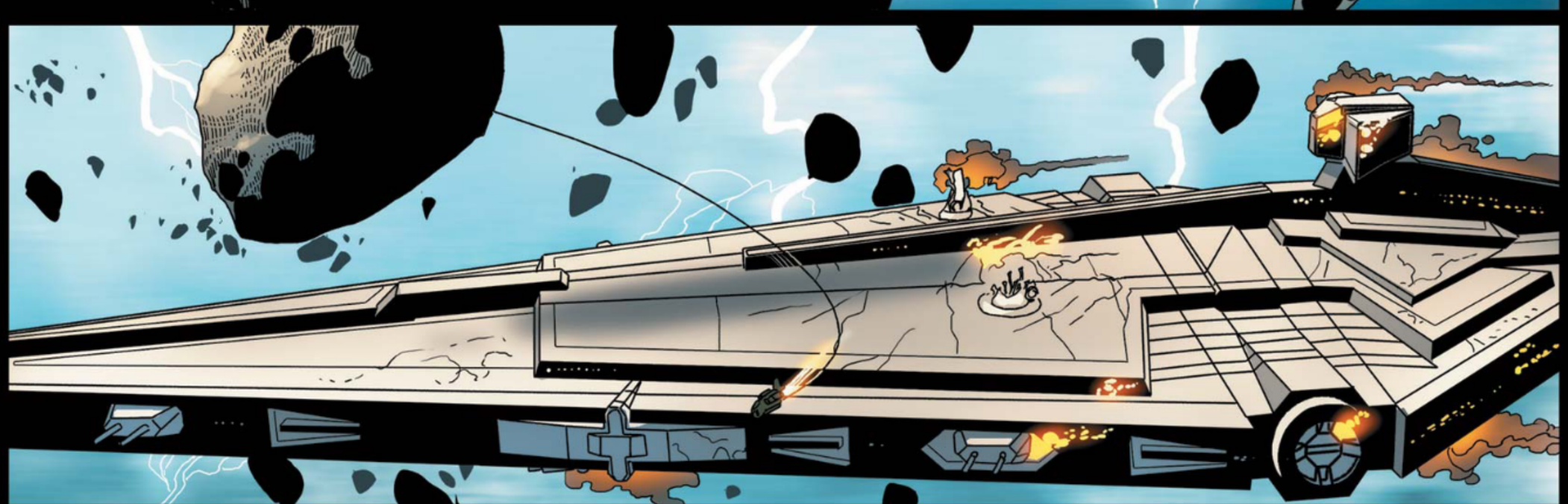
OKAY. THEY'RE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.
HARD TO BELIEVE IMPERIALSSS USSSSE DROIDS FOR WORK LIKE THISSS. OBSSSOLETE...
INTERJECTION: OFFENSIVE.
YOU'RE AN IG. NOT THE SSSSAME.
THE IMPERIAL STORMTROOPER PENSION SCHEME ISN'T EXACTLY MARKET LEADING, BOSSK. THEY'RE NOT LETTING ANYONE WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN A PROGRAM IN THEIR HEAD ANYWHERE NEAR THE RICH STUFF.
GET READY...


ONLY GOT A COUPLE MORE MINUTES AND THEN THEY'LL GET THE DOOR OPEN.
SSSS. LET THEM.
MURDER ON YOUR OWN TIME, BOSSK. IF WE LET THEM THROUGH, WE HAVE TO BLOW THE SHIP TO COVER OUR TRACES. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE NO ONE KNOWS WE WERE EVER HERE...
AND NOW WITH THE HOMER SET, LET'S RUN FOR OUR LIVES.
TRIPLE-ZERO--TELL THE BIG HAIRY LUMP HE CAN START HIS RUN.
MR. KRRSANTAN--MISTRESS APHRA INFORMS ME YOU CAN BEGIN...

GRRRROWWWWLLL!







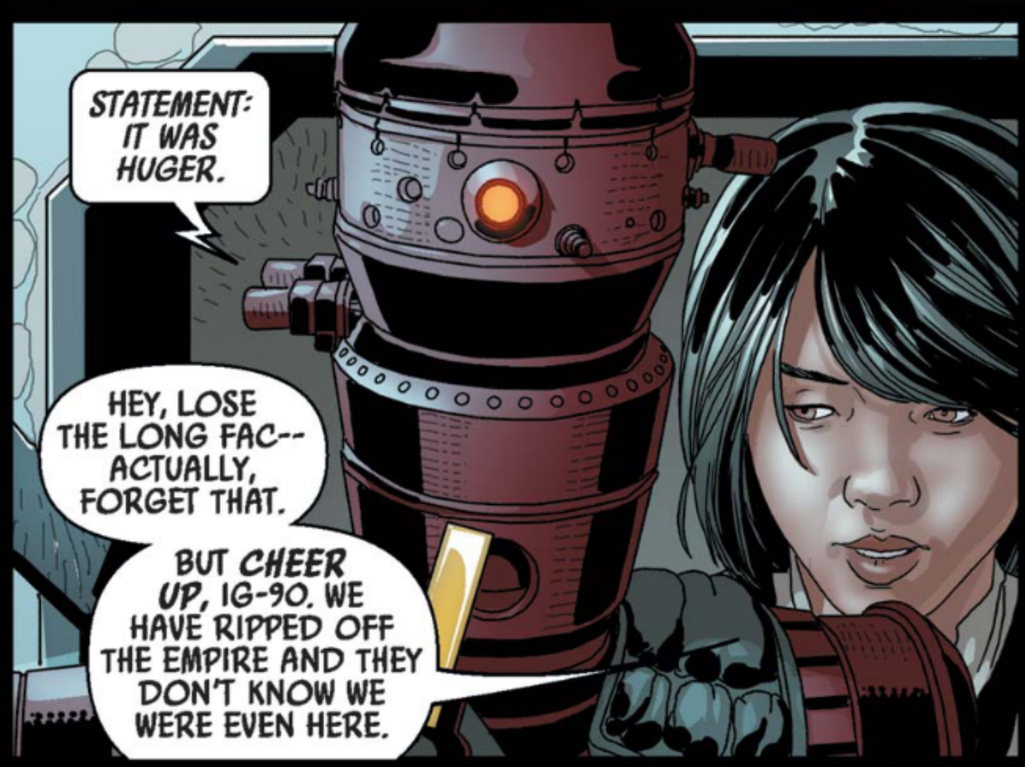
WELCOME BACK, MISTRESS APHRA. THE ASTEROID APPEARS TO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PENETRATED THE HULL.
THE INGOTS AND ALL EVIDENCE YOU WERE EVER THERE IS JETTISONING INTO SPACE. IT'S RATHER PRETTY, THOUGH IT IS RATHER A SHAME THAT NO HUMANOIDS WERE--
NOT THE TIME. NOW, IF I'VE CALCULATED THIS RIGHT, BEETEE WILL DO THE REST.
ANYONE WITH FINGERS, CROSS 'EM...

"...AND HOPE THAT BEETEE CAN GENERATE ENOUGH OF A FIELD TO SCOOP UP THE LOOT."

"BECAUSE LOSING SEVERAL KERZILLION CREDITS INTO SPACE WOULD PUT A DOWNER ON THE DAY."

ARE WE RICH?
WELL, WE'RE RICH... ER.

C'MON! THE MATH WAS HARD. THERE WERE A LOT OF VARIABLES WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW.
IT'S STILL A SCORE. IT'S STILL A HUGE SCORE.

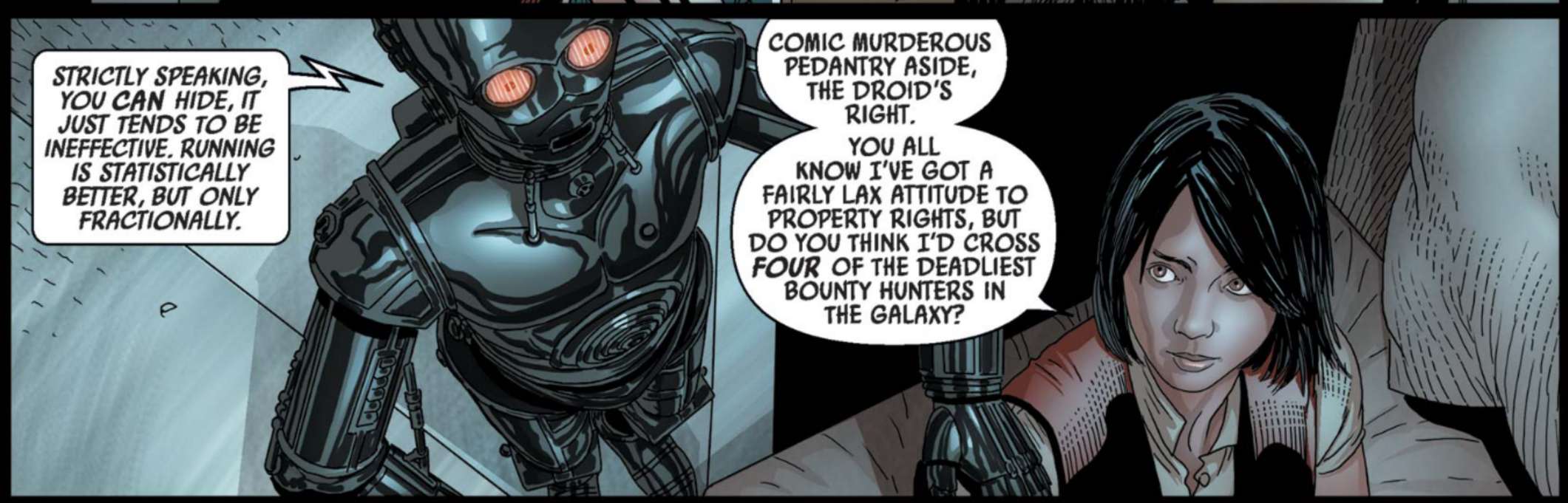

STATEMENT: IT WAS HUGER.
HEY, LOSE THE LONG FAC-- ACTUALLY, FORGET THAT.
BUT CHEER UP, IG-90. WE HAVE RIPPED OFF THE EMPIRE AND THEY DON'T KNOW WE WERE EVEN HERE.

WELL, NO SUCH THING AS EASY CREDITS. LET'S CARVE THIS NABOO POND FOWL UP.
OKAY. I FRONTED THE CASH FOR ALL THE EQUIPMENT. I TAKE EXPENSE THEN DIVIDE BY...

CLICK-CLICK
KRRRRROOOOOWWWWL.

OKAY, OKAY. EXPENSES FROM MY BACK END.

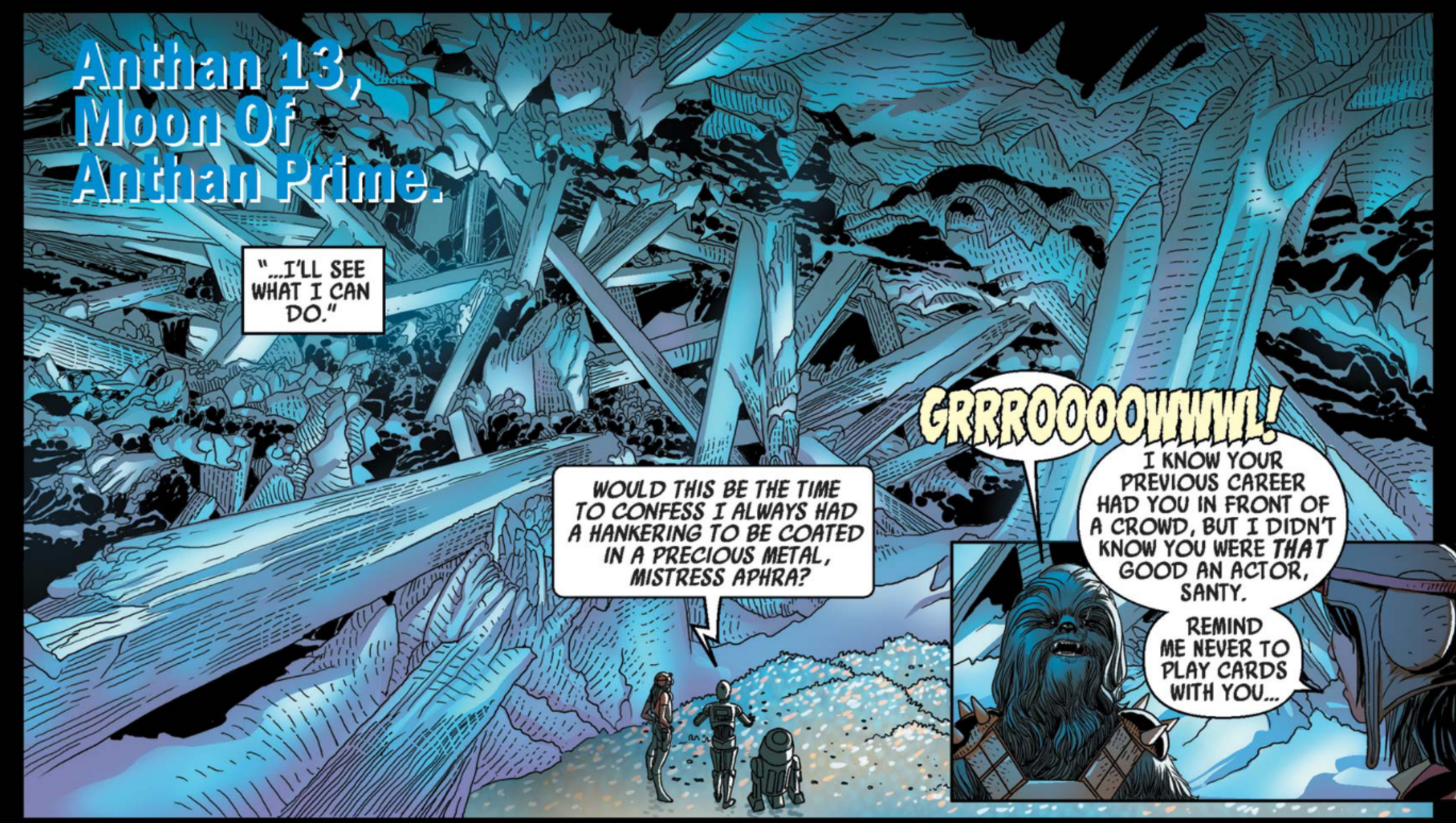
YOU GUYS ARE NOT TEAM PLAYERS.
GRRROOOWWWL.
YEAH, THE WOOKIEE'S RIGHT. YOU BETTER NOT HAVE CROSSED US, APHRA.
STATEMENT: YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM THE BOUNTY HUNTERS.


STRICTLY SPEAKING, YOU CAN HIDE, IT JUST TENDS TO BE INEFFECTIVE. RUNNING IS STATISTICALLY BETTER, BUT ONLY FRACTIONALLY.
COMIC MURDEROUS PEDANTRY ASIDE, THE DROID'S RIGHT.
YOU ALL KNOW I'VE GOT A FAIRLY LAX ATTITUDE TO PROPERTY RIGHTS, BUT DO YOU THINK I'D CROSS FOUR OF THE DEADLIEST BOUNTY HUNTERS IN THE GALAXY?

I THINK YOU'D THINK ABOUT IT.

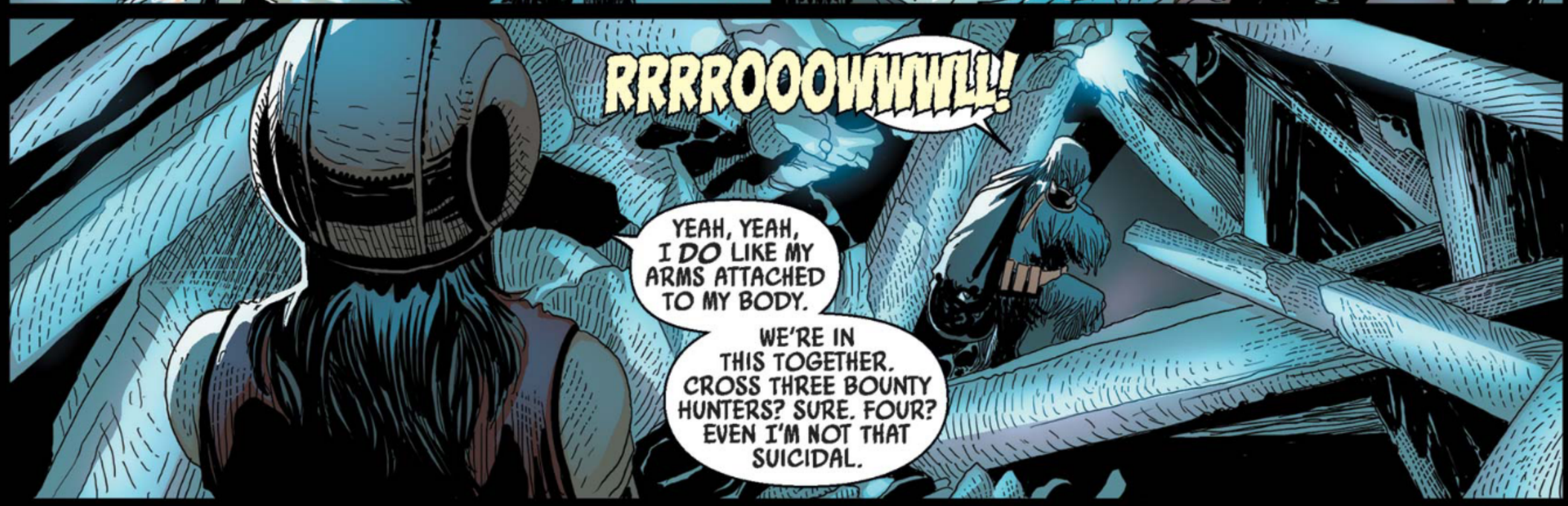
THEN SSSLINK AWAY.

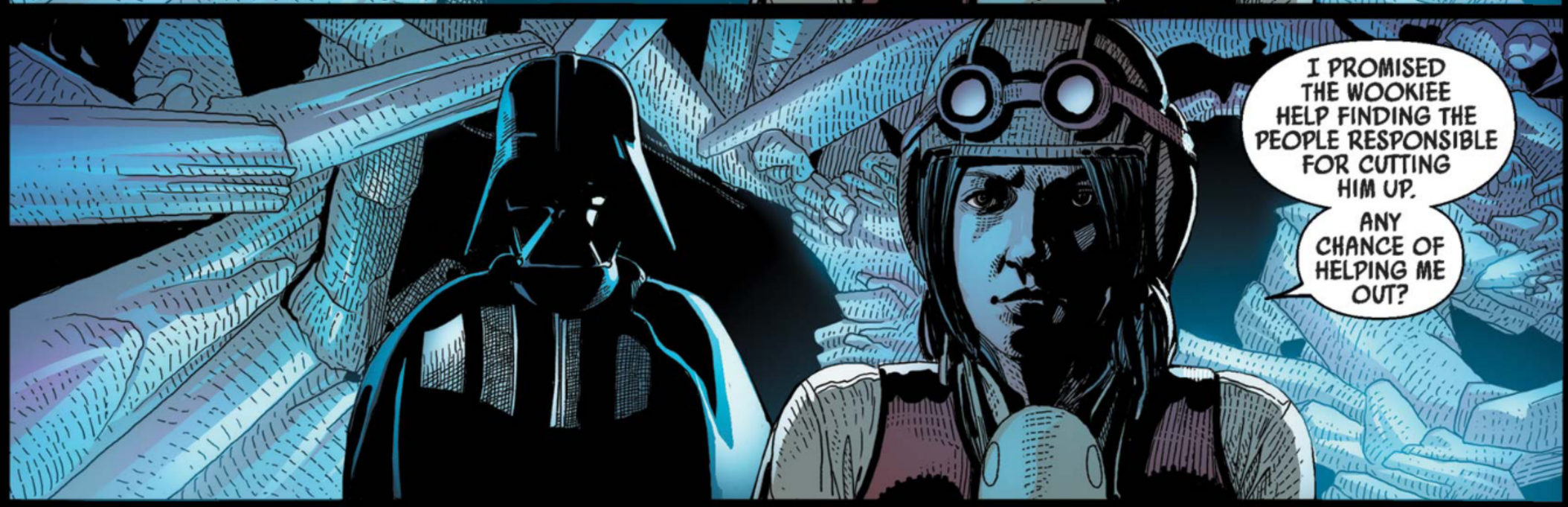
DO THIS AGAIN SOON, SOMETIME? MY EMPLOYER HAS MORE WORK COMING UP.
NEXT TIME YOU PAY UP FRONT, APHRA.
YOU KNOW, BEEBOX...


Anthan 13, Moon Of Anthan Prime.
"...I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO."
WOULD THIS BE THE TIME TO CONFESS I ALWAYS HAD A HANKERING TO BE COATED IN A PRECIOUS METAL, MISTRESS APHRA?
GRRROOOOWWWL!
I KNOW YOUR PREVIOUS CAREER HAD YOU IN FRONT OF A CROWD, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE THAT GOOD AN ACTOR, SANTY.
REMIND ME NEVER TO PLAY CARDS WITH YOU...

YEAH, FIVE TIMES YOUR SCORE...

AND I'LL HELP YOU WITH YOUR PROBLEM.


RRRROOOWWWLL!
YEAH, YEAH, I DO LIKE MY ARMS ATTACHED TO MY BODY.
WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER. CROSS THREE BOUNTY HUNTERS? SURE. FOUR? EVEN I'M NOT THAT SUICIDAL.


I PROMISED THE WOOKIEE HELP FINDING THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR CUTTING HIM UP.
ANY CHANCE OF HELPING ME OUT?

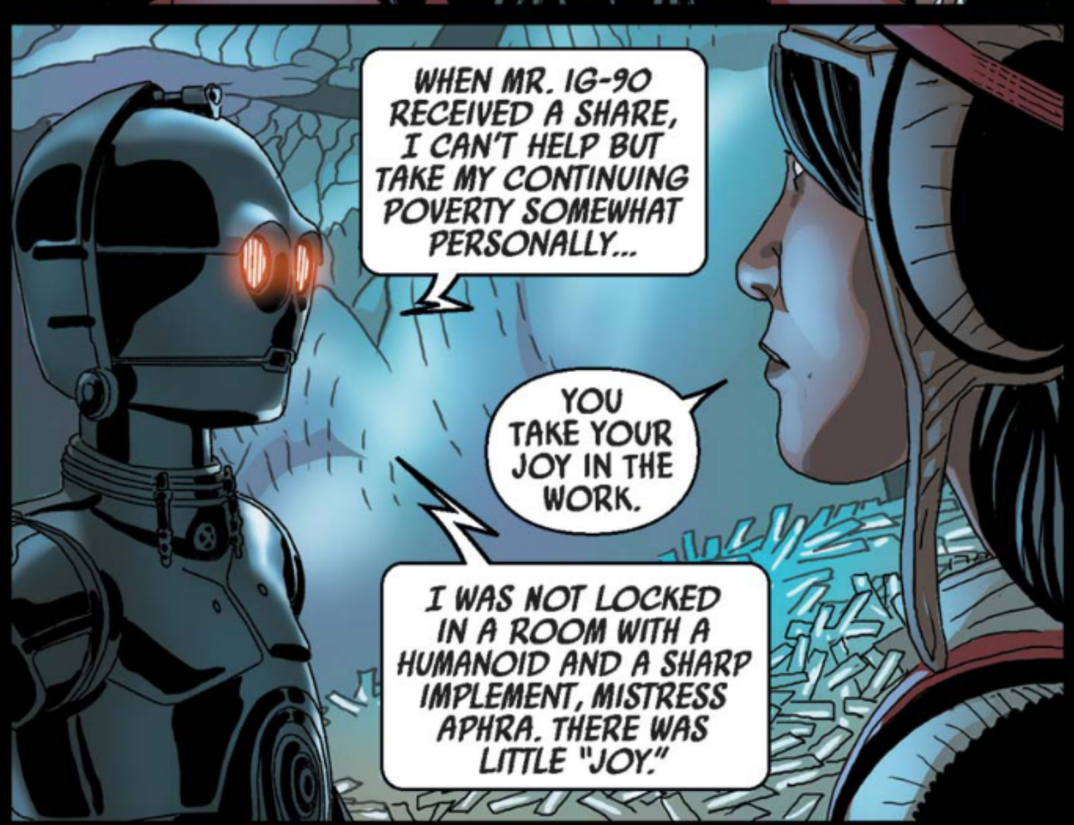
WE WILL SEE.

NOW...WE HAVE A DROID FACTORY. WE HAVE THE BOUNTY HUNTERS. WE HAVE THE MONEY TO PAY THE BOUNTY HUNTERS. WHAT NEXT?
IS IT A HOLIDAY? I THINK I'M DUE A LITTLE HOLIDAY TIME.
I NEED CERTAIN INFORMATION CONFIRMED FROM ONE WHO IS PROVING ELUSIVE.

THE KID WHO DESTROYED THE DEATH STAR?
NOT YET. FIRST THIS.

CONTACT ME ONLY WHEN YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED.
IF YOU DO NOT CONTACT ME WITHIN A MONTH, I WILL CONTACT YOU.

THAT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU WOULD ENJOY.


WHEN MR. IG-90 RECEIVED A SHARE, I CAN'T HELP BUT TAKE MY CONTINUING POVERTY SOMEWHAT PERSONALLY...
YOU TAKE YOUR JOY IN THE WORK.
I WAS NOT LOCKED IN A ROOM WITH A HUMANOID AND A SHARP IMPLEMENT, MISTRESS APHRA. THERE WAS LITTLE "JOY."

PATIENCE, TRIPLE-ZERO.
IN THIS OUTFIT, IT CAN BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

Mygeeto.

Son-tuul.

Anthan 14.

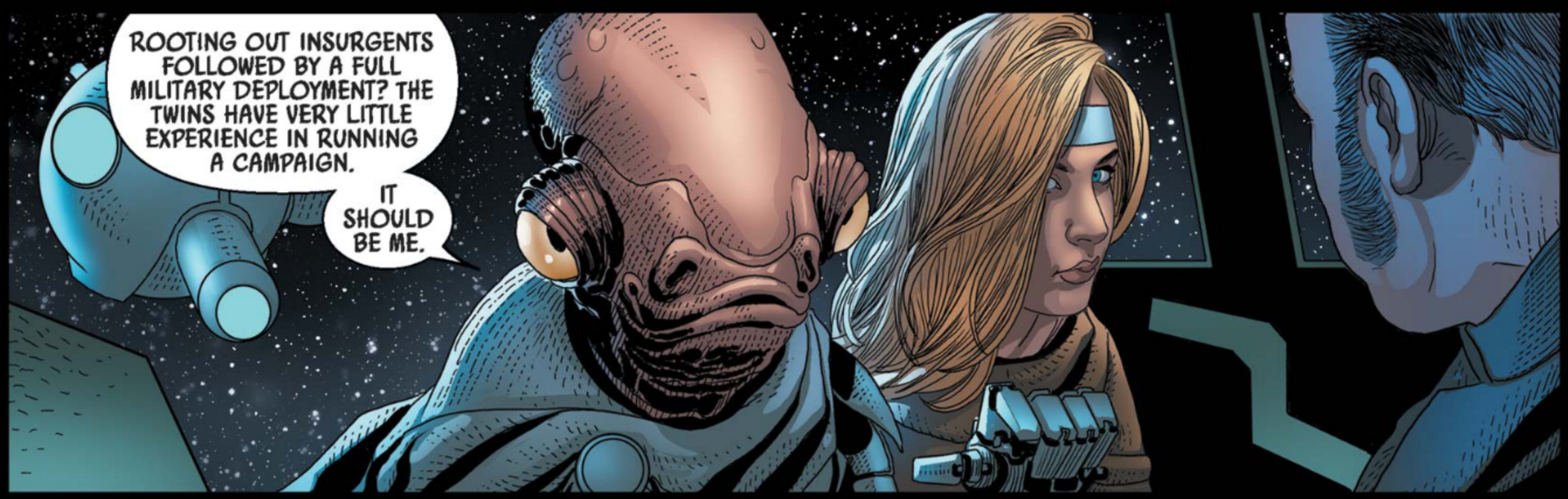
I GIVE YOU THE PLASMA DEVILS.

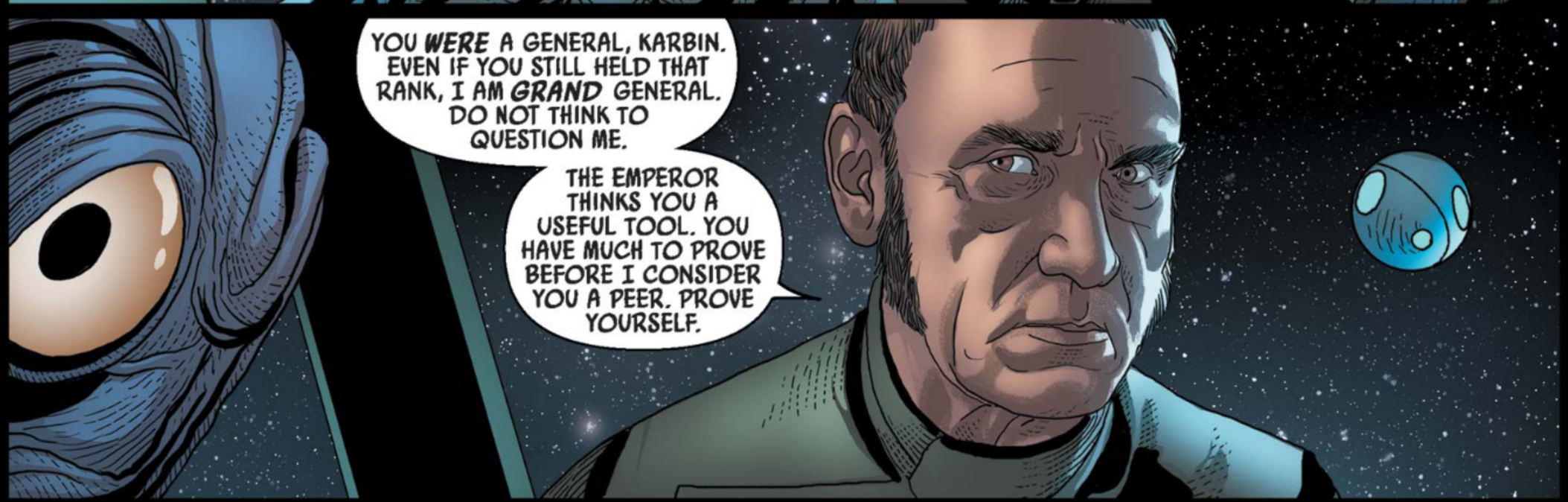
WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS IN THE SECTOR. THE CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN DISCIPLINED.
PLANETARY GOVERNORS MARCH MORE CLOSELY IN STEP. REBEL FORCES HAVE PRIMARILY SCUTTLED AWAY FROM OUR SURGE IN FORCES...

THE PLASMA DEVILS ARE THE ONE EXCEPTION. THEY ARE BURIED DEEP, AND STILL DEFIANTLY ACTIVE.
TO CRUSH THEM IS OUR MAIN REMAINING TASK BEFORE WE CAN MOVE ON...

THE ASTARTE TWINS. THIS WILL BE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

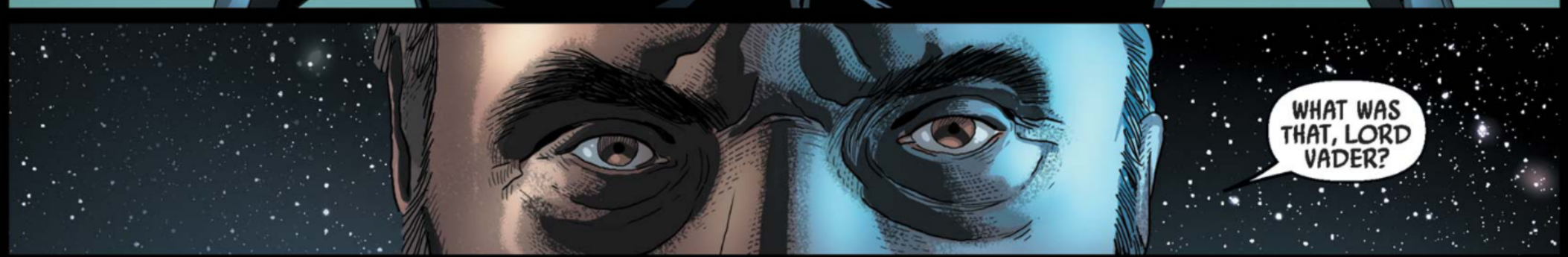
REALLY?


ROOTING OUT INSURGENTS FOLLOWED BY A FULL MILITARY DEPLOYMENT? THE TWINS HAVE VERY LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN RUNNING A CAMPAIGN.
IT SHOULD BE ME.


YOU WERE A GENERAL, KARBIN. EVEN IF YOU STILL HELD THAT RANK, I AM GRAND GENERAL. DO NOT THINK TO QUESTION ME.
THE EMPEROR THINKS YOU A USEFUL TOOL. YOU HAVE MUCH TO PROVE BEFORE I CONSIDER YOU A PEER. PROVE YOURSELF.

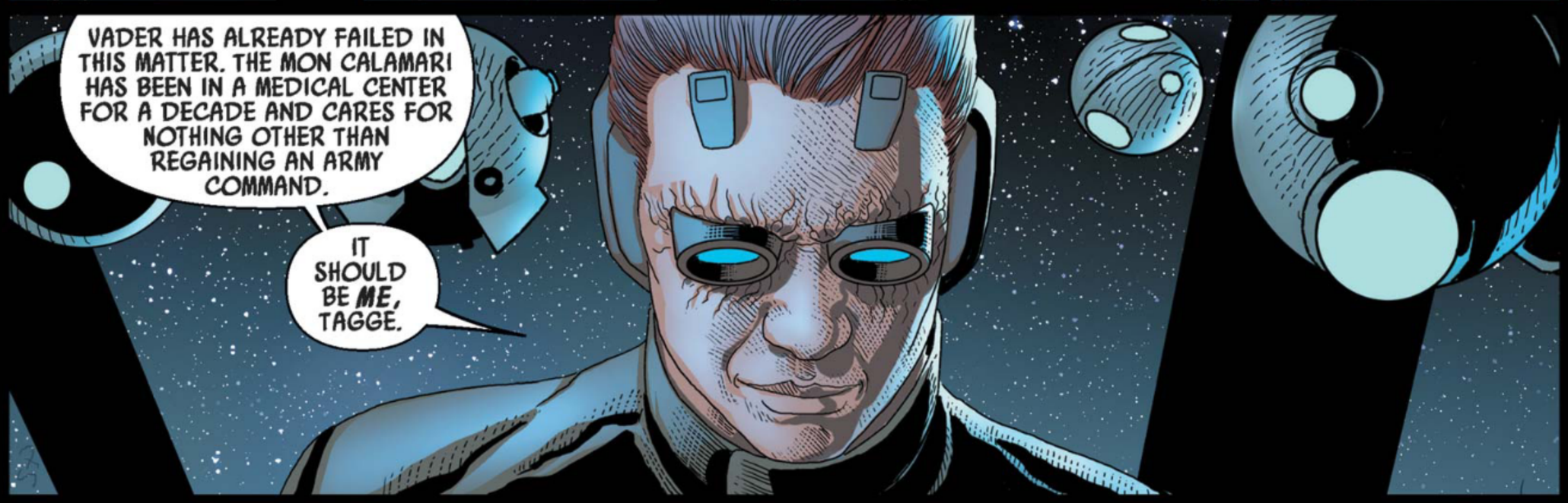
I ALSO HAVE SOMETHING IN MIND FOR YOU.
WE'RE STILL WORKING IN THE SHADOW OF THE DEATH STAR'S DESTRUCTION. IT WAS A MAJOR STRATEGIC AND PROPAGANDA VICTORY FOR THE REBELS. WE NEED A COUP OF OUR OWN.

WE HAVE CERTAIN LEADS THAT POINT US TOWARDS THE REBEL PILOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DESTRUCTION.
I WISH HIM CAPTURED OR, FAILING THAT, KILLED.

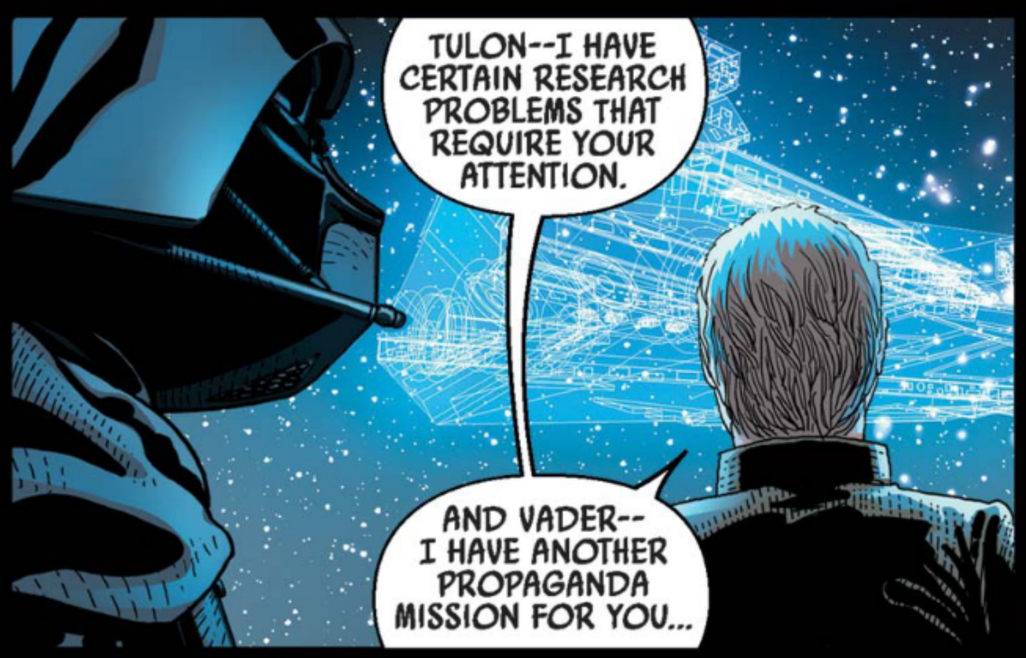

NO.
WHAT WAS THAT, LORD VADER?

THE TASK IS MINE. MY GRUDGE WITH THIS REBEL IS PERSONAL.
I WILL HUNT THE PILOT DOWN AND DELIVER HIM TO THE EMPEROR PERSONALLY.

WE'RE NOT HERE FOR YOU TO SALVE YOUR CONSCIENCE FOR YOUR FAILURE, VADER.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MANY BRILLIANT MINDS WERE SNUFFED OUT IN THAT EXPLOSION.


VADER HAS ALREADY FAILED IN THIS MATTER. THE MON CALAMARI HAS BEEN IN A MEDICAL CENTER FOR A DECADE AND CARES FOR NOTHING OTHER THAN REGAINING AN ARMY COMMAND.
IT SHOULD BE ME, TAGGE.

YOU ARE BOTH DISQUALIFIED BECAUSE YOU AND VADER ARE SO... PERSONALLY INVESTED.
YOUR PASSION IS DISRUPTIVE. I REFUSE TO LET YOUR EMOTIONALITY DISRUPT MY PLANS.


TULON--I HAVE CERTAIN RESEARCH PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE YOUR ATTENTION.
AND VADER-- I HAVE ANOTHER PROPAGANDA MISSION FOR YOU...

THE SON-TUUL'S PRIDE'S FORTUNE WAS STOLEN IN TRANSIT TO ANTHAN PRIME.
WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE NEEDS TO BE PUNISHED.

I THOUGHT IT LOST.

SO THE THIEVES WOULD HAVE YOU THINK. WE HAVE EVIDENCE THAT SUGGESTS OTHERWISE.
FIND WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE. GIVE THEM THE EMPEROR'S JUSTICE.

AS YOU WISH, GRAND GENERAL.

AND THAT BRINGS THE MEETING TO A CLOSE. YOU HAVE YOUR TASKS. YOU'RE DISMISSED.
I AWAIT YOUR SUCCESSFUL REPORTS WITH INTEREST.

OH-- VADER. THERE IS ONE MORE THING...

THIS IS INSPECTOR THANOTH. HE'S YOUR REPLACEMENT ADJUTANT FOR OON-AI. HE'S TO ASSIST YOU IN ALL THINGS.
THE EMPEROR INFORMS ME THAT THIS IS STILL A DIFFICULT TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR YOU.
AS THE EMPEROR WISHES.
WE HAVE A START, AT THE LEAST. THE CULPRITS LIKELY USED THE MOONS.
IT'S AN AREA YOU'RE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH, AND RECENTLY. THAT KNOWLEDGE WILL LIKELY PROVE USEFUL.
KNOWLEDGE?
FROM YOUR TRIP TO ANTHAN 13 YESTERDAY.

I BELIEVE THE SLIGHT IONIZATION OF SURFACE DUST ON YOUR ARMOR IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THAT PARTICULAR MOON.
WITHIN 24 HOURS, IT'D HAVE BEEN LOST, BUT FOR A DAY OR SO, IT'S QUITE DISTINCTIVE...
YOU ARE...MOST PERCEPTIVE.
LORD VADER. I'M NOT A SYCOPHANT, TRAITOR OR--WORST OF ALL--AN *INCOMPETENT* LIKE OON-AI.
I'M A PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATOR.
AND THIS? A *SIMPLE* CASE.
LARCENY IS THE LEAST OF THE GREAT CRIMES. MARK MY WORDS, WE'LL HAVE TIDIED THIS AWAY WITHIN DAYS.
WE SHALL SEE, THANOTH.
WE SHALL SEE.

THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK

DARTH VADER

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."

Dear Kieron,

I was rather excited to see an appearance from one of my "all-time, small-time" favorites: Bossk. I was disappointed that the first Bossk story I read seemed to be an exercise in stacking the deck against him in favor of some warm-blooded characters I was supposed to like more. As someone who has always liked the reptilian, yet another story about how reptiles are dumb and awful was just no fun at all.

So I'm writing with the most ridiculous of requests: please don't make Bossk an incompetent loser. Villainous, awful, terrible, amoral — all the things that can come with a profession of hunting down living beings for money: sure. I'm not asking for a hero, or an antihero, or anything like that — just competency that justifies his placement on the *Executor* next to the other big bads (who it's also been nice to see a few of!).

Knowingly Ridiculously,
R.C. Killian
Omaha, NE

PS: Messrs. Larroca and Delgado have done great justice on the book in general, but have also pulled off a mean Bossk. Please be sure they know this.

Thanks, R.C. Rest assured, I've been going to great lengths to get inside the cranium of Bossk. This involves method acting (primarily of getting my delightful wife C to don her Wookiee dressing gown and me hunting her around the house) and trying to remember to add sufficient Sssss to his dialogue. I hope the results of these efforts matched up to what Salva and Edgar brought to the page. - Kieron

Hello team!

I've been reading the new *Star Wars* and *Darth Vader* comics since their first issues, and I am enjoying them to bits. The continuity feels consistent and they have a film-like quality which makes them feel like they really are part of the new canon. The insertion of prequel-era content is cool and ties the overall saga together nicely. After reading *Darth Vader* #7, I was wondering if you guys might be showing the incident involving the bounty hunter on Ord Mantell that Han Solo once mentioned during *ESB*? My instincts tell me that Boba Fett might have been involved, but I'm having to keep guessing at the moment!

Looking forward to the next issues!

Hugh Maughan

Glad it's working for you, Hugh. I'm trying to integrate the various bits of canon as much as we can. It's Vader, and Vader has all of Anakin's history, and softly showing how the two figures relate is much of what we're trying to do. As regarding that event on Ord Mantell? You never know. It's certainly in the period of our stories. - Kieron

I just read *Darth Vader* #7! It was awesome! I really liked the scenes with Vader visiting Tatooine! I also like how this series has shown how Vader found out that Luke was his son! I am looking forward to seeing what happens in #8!

Troy Vevasis

Thank you. I am also looking forward to you seeing what happens in #8, though being British, I'm also very anxious that I've broke this streak of entertaining you. I hate to disappoint people. Basically, if I was a Jedi, my fear of disappointment would lead to anger, hate, and eventually disco. - Kieron

Darth Vader is one of my favorite books right now, and I would like to thank you for making it so enjoyable. I wish the Trandoshan who didn't feel any pain survived because he looked so cool. I like the idea of the twins not having any connection to the Force, but still holding their own against Vader. I can't wait to see what you do with them. Just one question: What are the twins' names? Do they even have names? Thanks!

Christian

Thank you. I suspect we'll be seeing other people – perhaps more Trandoshans – plugged in with that system. At least part of the appeal of it for Cylo is that the hosts are replaceable. You'll have seen the twins more this issue, but in case you jumped to the letters page first 1) their names are Aiolin and Morit Astarte. 2) your priorities are all wrong. Read the issue! Everyone involved tries really hard with it, and I'm just writing these answers while watching the latest series of *Community*. - Kieron

There's something about *Star Wars* and Marvel...

The writers and artists over the years (from Roy Thomas, Howard Chaykin, Archie Goodwin, Carmine Infantino, to you, Salvador and the other current creators) always seem to bring their own unique talents and styles to this universe.

Old, familiar characters are interwoven with new ones effortlessly, and the storylines seem to flow as though on the silver screen.

If you can't tell, I'm happy the MU and SW are back together.

Cheers,
John Rule

Thank you. And now I'm once more freaking out over the enormous shoes I'm trying to fill. Thanks, John. I'll send you my therapist bills. - Kieron

Hi guys. First of all I want to thank you guys for bringing such a cool story in *Darth Vader*! Keep up the good work! And I can tell you guys right now: I kinda have the hots for Dr. Aphra. I really like the way she's drawn ;-P

Greetings from Belgium,
Huûghe Vergil

I would respond to you properly, but I am just so in love with your name that I can't concentrate. What a name, Huûghe! I hail you. I hail you hard. - Kieron

Hey guys!

We have been truly loving each of the *Star Wars* comics coming out but without doubt the one book we eagerly wait for each month is definitely *Darth Vader*! From issue #1 all the way to the current issue we have been enthused to continue to follow this new adventure set in a prior time period. The new characters such as Dr. Aphra, BT, and Triple Zero are very welcome additions to Vader's story as well as the old faces and locations we know all too well. The moment when Vader was back on Tatooine in front of the two suns in issue #7 was awe-inspiring and incredibly spine chilling with his arrival at Obi-Wan's former home! We cannot wait to see what kind of twists and turns this all-new chapter in Vader's history will take, and are still waiting eagerly for that next issue. Keep up the amazing work, guys, and Kieron please don't ever stop writing this comic!!!

Brandon & Ashley
Atomic Comics, Tacoma, AS

Thanks, Brandon and Ashley. I'm glad the dual moons moment worked for you. Opening the second arc with Vader's visit to the homestead felt something that was completely necessary. Vader has a son? He'd want to go there. And when you've put Vader there, that image just seemed entirely irresistible. And you can tell that I was really excited about getting to write it, because I've given you a sincere answer rather than segueing into my normal neurotic Englishman routine. - Kieron

NEXT: